

Courier

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County focuses on gang prevention

Fairfax County has long been involved in gang prevention, having the Police Gang Investigative Unit since 1994 and countering the lure of gangs with numerous youth recreational and educational programs. However, for the past year, the county has been expanding and consolidating its gang prevention efforts under the communitywide Coordinating Council on Gang Prevention and county Gang Prevention Steering Committee. Now, the resources of the county and the entire community are becoming even more effective in countering serious criminal activity.

"Fairfax County is one of the safest communities in the nation. The presence of gangs in our region is the one

cloud on the horizon. We need coordinated, community-based prevention and intervention efforts," said Board of Supervisors Chairman **Gerald E. Connolly**, who considers this issue one of the county's top priorities.

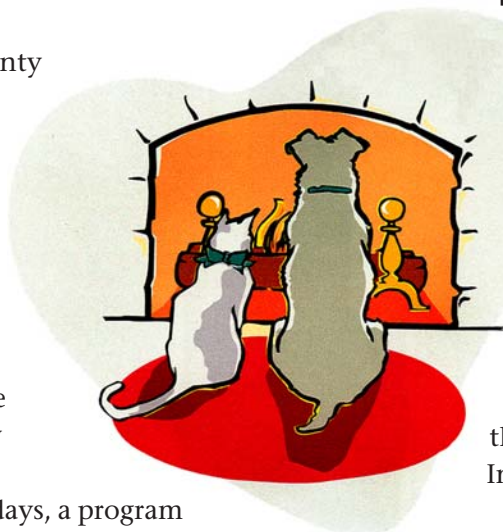
Headed by County Executive **Tony Griffin**, the Coordinating Council's responsibilities are managed by **Robert A. Bermingham Jr.** He is well suited for this task, having worked for the county for 17 years, including serving as a probation supervisor with the Fairfax County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court.

Bermingham's responsibilities are to coordinate the day-to-day gang prevention efforts throughout the county.

See Gang Prevention, page 2

Fairfax Animal Shelter sponsors pets 'Home 4 the Holidays'

The Fairfax County Animal Shelter is working with D.C. Metro No More Homeless Pets in a Home 4 the Holidays campaign to help encourage animal adoptions from the shelter this holiday season.



inspired by the Helen Woodward Animal Center in 1999, encourages people seeking to add a pet to their family to choose a shelter or rescue animal as opposed to going to a breeder or pet store during the holiday season. In 2004 alone, the eight-

Home 4 the Holidays, a program

See Pets, page 3

Gang Prevention, from page 1

This past winter, the county emphasized the importance of gang prevention with the first Gang Prevention Summit held Feb. 25 at the Government Center. Community groups, elected officials, students and many county employees came together to discuss ways to prevent and suppress the growth of gangs in the county.

**Bob Bermingham**

With more than 30 individuals, organizations and county agencies as coordinating council members, and an area as large and diverse as Fairfax County, Bermingham is constantly on the go. "The model we're following emphasizes 'partnering' as a key leverage in combating the growth of gangs. We need to coordinate the programs of nonprofits, schools, businesses and the community as well as county agencies to have even more effective results," he said.

Bermingham pointed out that the council's approach is proactive. "The purpose is not just to provide law enforcement but to develop programs that will counter such unwanted behavior before it becomes serious," he said. Programs such as additional recreational activities, after-school activities, work programs, parental involvement and

other community-based strategies can provide young people with better alternatives than joining gangs. "We need to ensure that individuals who are most prone to join gangs understand the reality of gang life while providing these same individuals with alternatives and options to

avoid gang membership," he said.

Public awareness about gang activity is another effective method of prevention. "We want to make as much information as possible available to the public on gang activity," Bermingham said, noting that the Web page at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/gangprevention will soon have a wealth of information on ways to recognize, prevent and resolve gang activity.

Bermingham also heads the Gang Prevention Resource Team which consists of 10 county agencies with programs to combat gang activity. "The resource team is what really makes the county's efforts so effective," he said.

On a recent trip to Los Angeles, he observed some of the programs in that area. "We learned how important it is to have students and community leaders 'buy-in' to programs to make them work. Getting everyone to work together to prevent gang growth is a key lesson," he said. "Fairfax County is fortunate to have leaders who very actively support this initiative."

In June, the Coordinating Council and the Steering Committee gave a progress report to the Board of Supervisors. Building on the ideas generated at the Gang Prevention Summit, the report (available online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/gangprevention) summarized accomplishments and outlined recommendations. Some of the accomplishments include:

- ◆ Expanding after-school programs. Twenty-four of the county's 25 middle schools offer at least three days of activities each week.
- ◆ Developing multiagency teams to work with young people involved in gangs and their families.
- ◆ Tapping young people for their ideas. This past summer, students developed a report that gave recommendations for gang prevention (see article in Sept. 2 *Courier*).
- ◆ Expanding the effectiveness of many organizations. Working with county agencies, communities and individuals to coordinate programs and resources that combat gang activity.

See Gang Prevention, page 3



Los Angeles fact-finding trip. Pictured from left to right are Bob Bermingham, Fairfax County Gang Prevention Coordinator; David Ellis, Department of Systems Management for Human Resources; three members of the Los Angeles Public School police; Capt. Debi Burnett, Fairfax County Police; and P.D. O'Keefe, Fairfax County Public Schools.

Gang Prevention, from page 2

What is the biggest challenge the county faces in gang prevention? According to Birmingham, intervention is the key to defusing the growth of gangs. "Connecting young people and their families with available resources and programs will reduce the attractiveness of gangs. We are drawing on the extensive network of Fairfax County services, and reaching out to the community and businesses to build a solid base to attack gang issues on all fronts," he said.

Future goals include a better understanding of unique gang activities in the area, develop-

ing more partnerships within the community and improving interaction with other regional jurisdictions.

Through the combined efforts of the Coordinating Council, Steering Committee and Resource Team, backed by a strong commitment from county leaders and the positive support from county agencies, the issue of gangs is being effectively addressed.

For more information about how the county is working to combat the growth of gangs, visit the Web page at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/gangprevention. ■

Pets, from page 1

week campaign surpassed its goal of helping shelters and rescue leagues across the United States find homes for more than 300,000 animals. The program has been so successful that it is now even being implemented internationally. This year, the campaign's six-year total for adoptions is expected to top more than 1 million pets that will have found new homes.

In November and December, the Fairfax County Animal Shelter is joining this successful campaign. On Nov. 19, the shelter will participate in a Home 4 the Holidays adoption event at Reston Town Center from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m.

In December, the shelter has added special holiday hours to provide the public with more time to view animals available for adoption. In addition to being open its normal hours Tuesdays through Saturdays, the shelter will open Sundays, Dec. 4, 11 and 18 from noon to 4 p.m.

In addition, the shelter will participate in Santa Paws at Fair Oaks Mall. Members of the public can have their pets' photos taken with Santa before the stores open on Sunday, Dec. 4, from 9 until 10:45 a.m. and Sunday, Dec. 11, from 7:15 until 9 p.m. For each portrait package sold,

Fair Oaks Mall donates \$5 to the Fairfax County Animal Shelter.

"We are excited about participating in the Home 4 the Holidays program this year," says Fairfax County Animal Shelter Director **Karen Diviney**. "So many wonderful pets find themselves in the shelter during the holiday season and we are delighted to be working with D.C. Metro No More Homeless Pets to ensure that these pets are where they deserve to be—in a home with a loving family."

The goal of the Fairfax shelter's Home 4 the Holidays program is to increase pet adoptions during the month of December by 10 percent.

If you or someone you know is planning to add a pet to their family this

holiday season, encourage them to drop by the shelter at 4500 West Ox Road, Fairfax, or call 703-830-1100.

More information about animals available for adoption is online at www.fairfaxpets.org. ■

Home 4 the Holidays



Shelter Hours:
Visit animals available in the shelter's adoption center at 4500 West Ox Road, Fairfax.

♦ Tuesday – Friday
10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

♦ Saturday
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Special Holiday Hours:

♦ Sundays, Dec. 4, 11 and 18
noon – 4 p.m.

Read more info about events at www.fairfaxpets.org.

Director of Department of Public Safety Communications appointed



Stephen H. Souder

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors recently appointed **Stephen H. Souder** as the director of the Fairfax County Department of Public Safety Communications after a nationwide search.

A nationally recognized leader in the field of 9-1-1 and public safety communications, Souder has served as director of the Montgomery County, Md., Police Department 9-1-1 Emergency Communications Center – one of the 50 largest such centers in the country – since November 2001. Previously, he was administrator of the Arlington County, 9-1-1 Public Safety-Emergency Communications

Center for more than 16 years, including leading that agency during the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack on the Pentagon.

A former member of the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve and the District of Columbia Fire Department, Souder was involved in placing into operation the first Computer Aided Dispatch system in the United States, and the second 9-1-1 system to serve a major city in the United States during his tenure in Washington.

In 2004, Souder also was recognized as the 9-1-1 Public Safety Communications Center Director of the Year for the state of Maryland. ■

EAC status report

Pay for Performance tops EAC agenda during the past months

Changes to Pay for Performance and the reorganization of the Civil Service Commission have dominated the Employees Advisory Council's agenda during the past several months. As "fully proficient" employees receive performance awards in their paycheck that amount to less than the average annual market rate adjustment (MRA) to the pay scale, EAC representatives on a PFP task force strongly urged adopting a two-part proposal: make the fully proficient award equal to the annual MRA (or no lower than 3 percent) and add a fifth rating bar, with a monetary award at one-half the fully proficient amount. This additional rating would allow supervisors to rate a promising employee somewhere between "unsatisfactory" or "fully proficient" and to give the employee a small reward.

The council also discussed increased member fees with the credit union, participated in the Selection Advisory Committee for Deferred Compensation vendors and sponsored its popular fall Craft Fair on Nov. 4.

In addition, the following issues were addressed during monthly meetings with the county executive and the human resources director:

- ♦ Inequitable application of FMLA among agencies
- ♦ Impact of Government Accounting Standards Board
- ♦ Injury leave; donated leave
- ♦ Internet use
- ♦ Fingerprinting and criminal background investigations
- ♦ Holiday pay
- ♦ Progressive discipline
- ♦ Reducing the number of county vehicles and using privately owned vehicles
- ♦ Telecommuting
- ♦ Revisions to the Management Analyst

class series and the subsequent negative effect on members of the Administrative Assistant Class Series, i.e., A.A. staff without a college education cannot certify for the M.A. series unless they have experience as an A. A. V or an Administrative Associate. ■

Visit the
EAC Web site at
www.fceac.org

Have a good
holiday, giving
thanks for
what we have.

Deferred compensation limits increase for 2006

Employees participating in the county's 457 deferred compensation program may wish to take advantage of higher plan limits for 2006. The normal deferred compensation limit will increase to \$15,000 (up from \$14,000) or 100 percent of includible compensation, whichever is less.

Playing catch-up

If you are age 50 or older and you have not been able to put aside as much money in your deferred compensation plan as you would like, it's not too late to play catch-up. There's still time to take advantage of the tax laws and prepare financially for your retirement.

For 2006 participants who are age 50 and older may contribute an additional \$5,000. This means that participants age 50 or older will be able to defer up to \$20,000 (normal limit of \$15,000 + age 50 limit of \$5,000) in 2006.

Additionally, employees who have reached or are within four years of their normal retirement date may defer up to \$30,000 in 2006 (up from \$28,000) by using the catch-up provision. The amount you can defer under catch-up is determined by your salary and your history of unused deferrals. DHR has a record of your deferral history and can provide you with the amount of your unused deferrals upon request. If you are within

four years of retirement, you can contact the Financial Benefits Help Desk at 703-324-4995, TTY 703-222-7314, for more information.

Make election changes in December

Employees who wish to change their deferral amount for the first pay date in January (Jan. 6, 2006) are encouraged to submit their change forms to DHR by Dec. 27. Biweekly deduction amounts are noted below for employees who choose to reach their 2006 plan contribution limit over 26 pay periods.

Employees may submit deferred compensation enrollment or change forms anytime throughout the year. Enrollment and change forms received in DHR in any given month will become effective the first available pay date of the next month. Forms are available on the Infoweb or by calling the Financial Benefits Help Desk. Completed forms may be faxed to 703-802-8795 or mailed to Employee Benefits, Department of Human Resources, Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway (Suite 270), Fairfax, VA 22035. ■

2006 Deferred Compensation Contribution Limits

2006 Plan Limits	Deduction Amount (limit 26 pay periods)
Normal Limit - \$15,000	\$ 577
Age 50 Limit - \$20,000	\$ 770
Catch-up Limit - \$30,000	\$1,154

Focus on Benefits



Adopt-A-Soldier for the holidays

Looking for a good holiday project for you, your family or organization? For a \$7 postal rate, you can mail a pre-packed box to a soldier in Iraq. The James Lee Community Center has created an Adopt-A-Soldier program to show support for our troops in Iraq, and recently a number of students, county employees and participants at the community center packed boxes of personal items for military men and women overseas. These boxes are available now at the community center and must be mailed soon to reach the destination by the holidays. Sorry, the community center cannot accept funds, so you

must pick up and mail the boxes yourself.

You also can donate items for the Adopt-A-Soldier project. According to **Bill Dunn**, the James Lee Community Center staff member who is spearheading this project, there are collection boxes in the community center and in the Department of Community and Recreation Services, 10th floor, Pennino Building. The boxes have a list of items that soldiers most appreciate.

For more information on this program, contact Bill Dunn at the James Lee Community Center, 2855 Annandale Road, Falls Church, 703-534-3387, ext 217, TTY 711. ■

After you get your soldier's name and mail a box, you may want to follow up with some homemade cookies later - always considered a warm touch of home.

Winter weather may mean county government closings or delays

When bad weather hits this winter, it could affect county offices. In the event of bad weather, the county executive decides if county facilities should be opened, closed or on delayed arrival, and if *unscheduled* (formerly *liberal*) *leave* or *emergency administrative leave* is to be granted.

♦ **Open** – County is open as usual.

♦ **Delayed arrival** – Conditions warrant the county executive to delay the work day. Employees are granted *emergency administrative leave* for the delayed time specified.

Employees arriving after that time will be charged *unscheduled leave*.

♦ **Closed** – County facilities are closed and *emergency administrative leave* is granted.

♦ **Unscheduled leave** – During bad weather when county facilities are open, the county executive may grant *unscheduled leave* (formerly *liberal leave*). *Unscheduled leave* is compensatory, annual or leave without pay taken by an employee. Prior approval from supervisors isn't required but employees must call supervisors to let them know. Employees designated as emergency service must report

for work.

♦ **Emergency administrative leave** – Paid leave authorized by the county executive.

How are employees notified of county closings?

During normal business hours, the Department of Human Resources notifies agencies of the county executive's decision for early closings. The Office of Public Affairs provides the closing information outside of normal business hours.

Where can I find county closing information?

Employees can call any of the inclement weather lines: 703-324-SNOW (7669), 703-246-SNOW (7669) or toll-free, 1-87-SNOW FFX1 (1-877-669-3391). County closing and delay information also is posted online on the county's Web site (www.fairfaxcounty.gov), on Channel 16 and the Emergency Alert Notification (EAN) system.

More information is available in the "Weather-Related Emergency Closings Guide" on the Infoweb at http://infoweb/opa/guide_for_agencies.htm. ■

For weather delays, check:

- 703-324-SNOW (7669)
- 703-246-SNOW (7669)
- 1-87-SNOW FFX 1 (1-877-669-3391)
- Channel 16
- Area media

Holiday Food Drive underway now through Dec. 8

Celebrate the holiday season by participating in the 13th annual food drive. Nonperishable food as well as household cleaning supplies and personal hygiene items are on the list (toothpaste, soap, shampoo and toilet tissue).

Government Center collection box locations are in the cafeteria and the Department of Human Resources/HR Central (Suite 270).

If these collection sites are not convenient for you, please consider setting up a collection site in your agency and delivering all donated food to the Department of Human Resources, (Suite 270) by the morning of Dec. 8.

All donations will again go to FACETS, a nonprofit organization providing emergency intervention and educational programs for homeless and low-income people in Fairfax County. In fiscal year 2005 (July 1, 2004 - June 30, 2005), FACETS served nearly 2,000 children and adults. FACETS depends on community support. Individual volunteers, faith partners, foundations, businesses and Fairfax County government contribute time, talent and financial gifts to support FACETS work with homeless and low-income people.

FACETS is in need of bottled water, juice boxes or cans, powdered milk, peanut butter and jelly, canned soup (not creamed variety), canned beans, dried goods, such as oatmeal, cereal, crackers, granola bars, noodles, instant potatoes, tuna/hamburger helper. Always in demand are baby items, such as baby food, diapers and baby hygiene items.

If you have questions, please contact **Traci Vaughan**, DHR, 703-324- 3317, TTY 711. ■

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First Friday and Security Awareness Day

Join County Executive **Tony Griffin** and his leadership team for **First Friday** on Dec. 2 in the Government Center Board Auditorium. The purpose of First Fridays is to give employees the opportunity to meet with the county executive and the county's leadership team. For information or reasonable ADA accommodations, call 703-324-3187, TTY 711.

The December First Friday session will be immediately followed by **Security Awareness Day**, which will focus on the importance of information security at both work and home. Security Awareness Day sessions will include: information protection in the government sector, protecting your kids online, protecting yourself against identity theft, and protecting your PC. Events are open to all employees, but registration is required; contact your agency training coordinator. For more information or reasonable ADA accommodations, contact the Department of Information Technology at 703-324-2745, TTY 711.

P2P Conference

Mark your calendar for Thursday, Dec. 8 for the fourth annual Procurement to Payment (P2P) Conference. An exciting agenda has been planned with a theme of "Change & Innovation." Join the Departments of Finance and Purchasing & Supply Management for vendor exhibits, door prizes, refreshments and opportunities to enhance your procurement to payment knowledge! Keynote speaker, **Mark Gorkin**, "The Stress Doc," will conduct an interactive presentation on managing change. All staff involved in procurement or payment processes

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are encouraged to attend. Contact your department training coordinator to register. Contact **George Hohmann** in the Department of Finance at 703-324-3085, TTY 711, if you have questions.

Book Mart for buying and listening

How about a book as that special gift this holiday season? You can find just the right one and meet some area authors at the Holiday Book Mart on Dec. 11, from 2 until 4 p.m. at the Fairfax City Regional Library. Sponsored by the Friends of Fairfax City Library, the Historical Society of Fairfax County and the Fairfax County History Commission, the event features a gently used book sale and a number of local authors who have published books of local interest.

Among the authors who will be present along with copies of their books are Ross Netherton, Laura Elliott, Richard Crouch, Cordelia Sansone, Connie and Mayo Stuntz, Don Hakenson, Margaret Peck Lew Helms, Page Johnson, Anne and Willard Webb, Patrick O'Neill, Paula Elsey, Marjorie Lundegard and Chuck Mauro.

If you have questions, please call the Library's Virginia Room at 703-293-6383, TTY 711.

Communication Strategy wins award

The Fairfax County Communication Strategy recently was selected for a gold award in the MarCom Creative Awards program. The MarCom Creative Awards is an international awards competition that recognizes outstanding achievement by marketing and communications practitioners. There were 4,613 entries this year from throughout

Briefs

the United States and several foreign countries, so this is a competitive and prestigious program.

Classified ads

Go to <http://infoweb> to place and read classified ads. A great way to find holiday gifts.

Santa's Ride on Dec. 14

Don't forget that toys, games, books and especially stuffed animals are needed for the 17th annual Santa's Ride, sponsored by the Fairfax County Police Department's motor squad. The police deliver the items to children in area hospitals during the holidays. Drop your items off in boxes in the Government Center (print shop, chairman's office or cafeteria) or Pennino Building no later than 10:30 a.m. on Dec. 14. Then come out at 12:30 p.m. on Dec. 14 and join in all the fun. Call **Anita Vines** at 703-324-2838, TTY 711, if you have any questions.



Where in the box is Anita?

Using Excel happily

When working in Excel, there are many shortcuts available that will ease movement, simplify operations, and save time. Here are a few that are useful.

- ♦ Press Ctrl+Home to locate the first active cell in your worksheet.
- ♦ Press Ctrl+End to locate the last active cell in your worksheet.

Note: Ctrl+Home and Ctrl+End provide similar functionality in the other Microsoft Office applications.

- ♦ After a review of your worksheet and you realize that one of your formulas may need a modification, press Ctrl+' (reversed accent mark, located above the Tab key). This action will toggle between showing formulas and data.

- ♦ As you work diligently, if you

realize that you need to either cut, copy, delete, format or hide the row you are editing. Press Shift+Spacebar, and the row you are located on is selected and highlighted. The same is true for columns by pressing Ctrl+Spacebar.

- ♦ Whenever you need to add today's date to a cell press Ctrl+; (semicolon) or press Ctrl+: (colon) to insert the current time.

- ♦ If the number of rows and columns are beyond the viewing area of your worksheet and you would like to see the header captions at all times, you can freeze your rows and columns. Select the row under the row or rows you want to freeze and click on the row number to the far left, which will highlight the row.

Tech Tip #99

Department of Information Technology Technical Infrastructure Division
Technical Support Center
Fairfax County Government Center
12000 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, VA 22035
Tel: 703-222-3535, option 1
Fax: 703-222-3396
TTY 711

On the standard toolbar select Window and then click on Freeze Panes. The row or rows above the selected row will remain stationary when scrolling. This also works with columns by selecting the column after the column or columns you want to freeze. Click the column letter at the top of the column to highlight the column. On the standard toolbar select Window and then click on Freeze Panes. Now the selected columns are frozen, remaining stationary like the rows. ■

Health Department shines

Two Health Department programs have been featured prominently in recent issues of two national trade association magazines.

The Disease Carrying Insects Program, Division of Environmental Health, was profiled in the summer issue of Wing Beats, the magazine of the American Mosquito Control Association (AMCA). The magazine's cover featured artwork from the Health Department's popular calendar: "Don't Be Mosquito Meat! Use DEET." The accompanying article, "Recruiting an Army of 1,000,000: The Importance of Social Communication in Mosquito Control," was written by **Jennifer Johnson, Carl Sivertsen** and **Jorge Arias**, of the Health Department.

Also shining in the national spotlight is the Health Department's laboratory, which was featured in the Sept.-Oct. 2005 issue of The APHL


Minute, the national magazine of the Association of Public Health Laboratories. The article, "Fairfax County PHL: At the Edge of the Nation's Capital," showcased the Health Department Laboratory, giving special prominence to its distinguishing characteristics and success stories, including the fact that the 10,000 square-foot facility is the largest local public health laboratory in Virginia. The article also described its important role during the 2001 anthrax investigations.

"County employees and residents can be very proud of the Division of Environmental Health's Disease Carrying Insects Program and the Health Department Laboratory. These programs are among the best in the nation, and serve as model programs for other organizations," said **Gloria Addo-Ayensu**, M.D., health director. ■

Don Smith Award nominations due

Nominations for the Don Smith Award are being accepted until Friday, Dec. 2.

The award recognizes county merit employees who demonstrate outstanding dedication and contributions to their fellow employees. Award recipients receive an engraved plaque and a cash award of up to \$1,000. Contact **Bob Fitzpatrick** in DHR at 703-324-3306, TTY 711, for further information or forms. ■



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